

## Ways to Show Support for our Troops and Get Involved

Thousands of Americans are asking what they can do to show their support for service members, especially those serving overseas in this time of war. The following is based on a list compiled by Holly Garcia – a small business owner in Scottsdale and a mother of 10 – that includes some of the things fellow citizens might wish to consider. I am pleased to be able to share it with you. Thank you, Holly.

**Donate a calling card.** *Operation Uplink*, a unique program established by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, keeps military personnel and hospitalized veterans in touch with their families and loved ones by providing them with free phone cards. Contributions to *Operation Uplink* are used to purchase phone cards and distribute them to servicemen and women who are separated from those they care about. For more information about Operation Uplink, visit <http://www.operationuplink.org/>.

**Send a greeting via e-mail to a member of the U.S. military through *Operation Dear Abby*.** To participate, visit Dear Abby at <http://anyservicemember.navy.mil/>.

**Sign a virtual thank you card.** Visit the Defend America website established by the Department of Defense at <http://www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html> to thank service members for defending our freedom.

**Donate a care package.** The United Service Organizations (USO) offers a unique way for individuals and corporations to let our nation's defenders know we haven't forgotten them. *Operation USO Care Package*, sponsored by the USO World Headquarters and administered by the USO of Metropolitan Washington (USO-Metro), enables individuals to write a personal message and financially support care packages that will be delivered to service members participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Visit the USO at <http://www.usometrodc.org/care.html>.

**Donate** to one of the military relief societies:

- Army Emergency Relief at <http://www.aerhq.org/>
- Navy/Marine Relief Society at <http://www.nmcrrs.org/>
- Air Force Aid Society at <http://www.afas.org/>
- Coast Guard Mutual Assistance at <http://www.cgmahq.org/>
- Operation USO Care Package at <http://www.usometrodc.org/care.html>
- American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services at <http://www.redcross.org/services/afes/>

**Volunteer** at a VA Hospital to honor veterans who bore the lamp of freedom in past conflicts.

**Support families** whose loved ones are being treated at military and VA hospitals through a donation to the Fisher House at <http://www.fisherhouse.org>.

**Visit the Defense Department's "Support our Troops" website for more information and other ideas about how you can be of help.** The Support our Troops website can be found at [http://www.defendamerica.mil/support\\_troops.html](http://www.defendamerica.mil/support_troops.html).